

“The Hearing-Impaired Heart ...Hearing, Seeing, and Knowing—NOT!”

Hebrews 3 & 4

September 10, 2023

Hebrews 3:7-9

⁷ Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says,
“Today, if you hear his voice,
⁸ do not harden your **hearts** as in the rebellion,
on the day of testing in the wilderness,
⁹ where your fathers put me to the test
and saw my works for forty years.

Hebrews 3:15-16

¹⁵ As it is said,
“Today, if you hear his voice,
do not harden your **hearts** as in the rebellion.”
¹⁶ For who were those who heard and yet rebelled? Was it not all those who left Egypt led by Moses?

Hebrews 4:2 For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened.

Hebrews 4:7 Again he appoints a certain day, “Today,” saying through David so long afterward, in the words already quoted,
“Today, if you hear his voice,
do not harden your **hearts**.”

INTRO ...Concerns about a Great Disconnect!

Hebrews 3 & 4 is going to take up a large piece of real estate to WARN these Hebrews about a Great Disconnect! ...The words “hearing, listening, seeing, and knowing” will be used—But they will all come up short!

How Vital Might These insights be for Our Day & Age—the Information Age! —There is More “Hearing, Listening, Seeing, and Knowing” in the average person’s Life than EVER in the History of Man!!

“...prior to Gutenberg’s invention of the printing press in 1450, it had taken months and even years to transcribe a single text onto parchment. ... It is estimated that a single book was worth thousands of dollars in today’s currency. ...After the invention of the printing press, it’s estimated that the amount of information ordinary people could access began to double every hundred years, and then every fifty. By the end of the twentieth century, it was doubling every seven months, and this was before the internet really took off.⁹ Today I can fit three thousand books on a single Kindle device, and there are thirty-three million titles available to me right now on Amazon, most for less than the price of an hour’s work at minimum wage. The sight of a book today rarely makes our hearts beat faster with excitement and expectation, let alone reverence and awe. ...Exhausted and numb, drowning in data, we have lost the art of reading wisely and well. We no longer know how to interact reverently, humbly, and slowly with a worthwhile text—even the Bible.” **Pete Greig**, “How to Hear God”, p. 80

...There is, today, our own kind of “hearing that doesn’t hear” and “seeing that doesn’t see”!! ...I am in touch with SO MUCH Information—and More is Pressing In! ...Thus, I Completely Forget Things or they Slip into INSIGNIFICANCE with Regretful Ease!

— “He who has ears, let him hear” is not a saying that is concerned with one’s physical auditory system! ...Divine Revelation is Intended to be “HEARD with the HEART”

Luke 24:32 They said to each other, “Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?”

...the Head (Ears & Intellect) were “hearing”—but the Heart was BURNING!

Ps 119:18 Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.

...while the eyes bring the “Seeing” it is the HEART that brings the “WONDERFUL”!!

"The heart is more important than the mind. I emerged from undergraduate studies in theology and sociology with a head full of knowledge about the Bible—and a diminished capacity to hear God speak through its pages. My times of Bible study were just that—times of dry, dutiful study. In learning about God's Word in general, I seemed to have lost my ability to hear his word to me personally. The medieval Franciscan Bonaventure said that we all have three sets of eyes: the eyes of the body, through which we see physically; the eyes of the mind, through which we reason; and the eyes of the heart, through which we gain spiritual insight. I knew that I needed to rediscover the art of reading the Bible with the eyes of my heart, not just with the eyes of reason, so that God could speak to me in whatever way he saw fit," **Pete Greig**, "How to Hear God", p. 68

Heb 3:7 "Today, if you HEAR his voice..." **Heb 3:9** "your fathers SAW my works for forty years" **Heb 3:16** "those who HEARD and yet rebelled" **Heb 4:2** "the message they HEARD did not benefit them" **Heb 4:7** "Today, if you HEAR his voice, do not harden your hearts"

There is a "hearing" that doesn't HEAR, a "Listening" that doesn't LEARN, and a "Seeing" that doesn't SEE! ...and if I'm trouble-shooting this issue—the Trouble is with the HEART more than the eyes or ears!

...Ears & Eyes can go through the motions of listening & seeing—But the HEART Hears & Sees in a DIFFERENT, Life-Giving Way!

Matthew 15:7-12 *You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said:*

⁸ "This people honors me with their lips,
but their heart is far from me;

⁹ in vain do they worship me,
teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."

¹⁰ And he called the people to him and said to them, "Hear and understand: ¹¹ it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but what comes out of the mouth; this defiles a person." ¹² Then the disciples came and said to him, "Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?"

...There are words & doctrines... hearing & teachings in this passage!!

...Jesus locates the problem in the HEART ...i.e., these things are not "Taken To HEART"!!

The "Wandering Wilderness HEART"

Ps 95 is extensively quoted here (Heb. 3 & 4)

Psalms 95 *Oh come, let us sing to the LORD; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!*

² *Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!*

³ *For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods.*

⁴ *In his hand are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are his also.*

⁵ *The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land.*

⁶ *Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!*

⁷ *For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.*

Today, if you hear his voice,

⁸ *do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, as on the day at Massah in the wilderness,*

⁹ *when your fathers put me to the test and put me to the proof, though they had seen my work.*

¹⁰ *For forty years I loathed that generation and said, "They are a people who go astray in their heart, and they have not known my ways."*

¹¹ *Therefore I swore in my wrath, "They shall not enter my rest."*

v. 1-7 ...The heart is Burning with its Hearing & Seeing!

v. 8-11 ...In contrast to those in the wilderness— (v.10) “They are a people who go astray in their HEART”

Proverbs 4:23 *Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.*

...What does this mean? ...It means monitoring your “affections” ...paying attention to Your “Drifting Value System”!!

In the United States, we are currently experiencing the largest and fastest religious shift in the history of our country, as tens of millions of formerly regular Christian worshipers nationwide have decided they no longer desire to attend church at all. These are what we now call the dechurched. About 40 million adults in America today used to go to church but no longer do, which accounts for around 16 percent ¹ of our adult population. For the first time in the eight decades that Gallup has tracked American religious membership, more adults in the United States do not attend church than attend church. ² This is not a gradual shift; it is a jolting one. (p. 3).

More people have left the church in the last twenty-five years than all the new people who became Christians from the First Great Awakening, Second Great Awakening, and Billy Graham crusades combined.¹² Adding to the alarm is the fact that this phenomenon has rapidly increased since the mid-1990s. **Jim Davis, Michael Graham, The Great Dechurching** (p. 5). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

"The dechurching phenomenon is a tremendous source of pain for many at the familial level. I (Mike) was talking with a woman recently who has four adult children. They all grew up in the church and in Christian schools. This woman is one of the kindest, godliest, and sincerest people I have ever known. She is a fabulous mom and overall person. However, three of her four kids don't go to church and are completely done with Christianity. Imagine her pain. ...We have spent countless pastoral hours talking, praying, and agonizing with parents and grandparents who are in anguish over their family members who have left the church." **Jim Davis, Michael Graham, The Great Dechurching** (p. 9).

Hebrews 4:2 *For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened.*

...You simply go somewhere else—when you stop perceiving a benefit!

— What Benefit Are You Seeking??

Psalm 119:18 *Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law.*

... When the Heart Stops Tasting & Seeing & Encountering WONDERFUL—IT becomes easily distracted and disengaged!!

Luke 21:34 *But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap.*

The Ugly Heart Life

When the Heart Stops “Seeing & Hearing”—Things Get UGLY!

...Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for creating a context Birthed Out of HYPOCRISY!!

...the Words used here & in Hebrews = “the rebellion” (3:8) ... “they always go astray in their heart” ... “an evil, unbelieving heart” (3:12) ... “failed to enter because of Disobedience” (4:6) ... “you have become dull of hearing” (5:11)

NOTE: “Deconstruction” and Distancing Oneself from Your Former Faith Community is NOT merely what “Victims of Imposed Beliefs” do—it is also what Disobedient Rebels Do who let their hearts grow DULL and have their Own Reasons for Letting Their Hearts Go ASTRAY!

The dechurched phenomenon has become disruptive between multiple generations of family members, causing two-way relational tension between parents (and grandparents) and their adult children that has no quick fix. Among dechurched evangelicals, about two-thirds expressed that their parents’ evangelical faith played a role in pushing them away from church. Much of this tension can be summarized by either a difference in political vision or in one’s affective posture toward culture and society. **Jim Davis, Michael Graham, The Great Dechurched (p. 10).**

Hebrews 4’s Context & Heading ...This is a “Warning” attached to an INVITATION! ...

Heb 4:16 *Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

...What if our need is a “Dull, Distant, Deaf Heart!”???